

November 17, 2022

The Honorable Chuck Schumer  
Majority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
322 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1236 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Minority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
317 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
Minority Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2468 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Majority Leader Schumer, Speaker Pelosi, and Republican Leaders McConnell and McCarthy,

We, the undersigned businesses, business leaders, and business organizations write to you in support of the Afghan Adjustment Act ([H.R.8685](#), [S. 4787](#)). As employers and business associations committed to a strong American economy, we highly value the contributions evacuated Afghans have made not only to our workforce and communities in the short time they have been in the United States, but also the invaluable support many gave to U.S. operations in Afghanistan. We reiterate the urgent need to provide them with long-term certainty and stability through a path to permanent legal status in this country before the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress terminates.

Afghans who arrived as part of Operation Allies Welcome are already making deep connections in communities across the country, and are enriching the social and economic fabric of our nation. They are our neighbors, our friends, and our co-workers. According to recently released [data from the International Rescue Committee](#), **this population is projected to make \$1.4 billion in potential annual earnings, and contribute \$189 million in taxes in their first year of work.** We urge you to support this legislation that will afford our Afghan employees, neighbors, and community members the opportunity to remain in this country on a permanent basis, as well as assist Afghans who remain at-risk in their home country.

Following the chaotic U.S. military withdrawal from Afghanistan, more than 76,000 U.S.-affiliated and at-risk Afghans have completed security vetting and were welcomed into the United States. However, unlike immigrant visa or refugee programs, most of our new Afghan neighbors do not have a clear pathway to permanent status – they can only remain in the United States temporarily. As such, these Afghans who entered the U.S. under Operation Allies Welcome find themselves under a cloud of legal uncertainty, as their temporary protections and work authorization are set to expire two years after arrival. Afghans are already thriving in their new communities, but the continued uncertainty over their future in the U.S. poses challenges for many American employers and made it more difficult for all evacuees to find stable, long-term employment. At a time when many American companies are struggling mightily to meet their workforce needs, the Afghan Adjustment Act will help many businesses fill open positions that have gone unfilled for quite some time.

The Afghan Adjustment Act would allow certain Afghan evacuees to apply for permanent status after one year or two years after they entered the country. It would relieve pressure on the asylum and Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) processes, which are both enormously backlogged and take years to adjudicate individual applications. Critically, it would also ensure that our Afghan neighbors, who fled unspeakable circumstances to find safety, neither lose their jobs after two years nor find themselves in the

United States without legal status. The effect and purpose of this legislation is to put our new Afghan neighbors on the same legal footing they would have enjoyed had they been admitted through the U.S. refugee resettlement program, while also ensuring they have gone through strict and necessary vetting procedures. After the harrowing experience of saving themselves and their families from violence and putting their lives on the line to support the United States military, they deserve the stability that the Afghan Adjustment Act would provide.

The passage of the Afghan Adjustment Act is about more than providing certainty to our new Afghan neighbors; it is a demonstration of global leadership that safeguards national security. This legislation shows that the U.S. upholds its commitments to people seeking safety and a failure to pass this bill could erode global trust in America. Importantly, the bill mandates that applicants attend in-person interviews, undergo additional security screening, and many evacuees will have to pass a joint DHS-DOD vetting database. It will require every Afghan who applies for adjustment to be re-vetted and meet the vetting requirements equivalent to those used for the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program. Passing this bill is an investment in U.S. national security at home and abroad.

Over the past year, communities across the country have shown an outpouring of support for their new Afghan neighbors. Their economic and communal contributions, as well as the service many of them provided to the United States in Afghanistan, are undeniable, and our nation will certainly be worse off — economically and otherwise — if they are forced to remain in legal limbo regarding their status in the U.S. Congress must act swiftly and enact the Afghan Adjustment Act before the end of this Congress.

Thank you,

*U.S. Chamber of Commerce, DC*

*Airbnb, CA*

*Ben and Jerry's Homemade Inc, VT*

*Cotopaxi, UT*

*DoorDash, CA*

*Luke's Lobster, ME*

*Bamboo Inc., DE*

*Bent Glass Design Inc., PA*

*Cedar Rapids Metro Economic Alliance, IA*

*ChamberWest Chamber of Commerce, UT*

*Conklin Immigration Law LLC, MD*

*Devon Bank, IL*

*Duane Morris LLP, PA*

*EOR Security, MD & CA*

*Evocati, VA*

*Fairfield Realty Group, LLC, CT*

*Guyton Thuenta PC, MN*

*Host-a-Scholar, CA*

*Human Agency, MO*

*Isa Law PA, FL*

*Jarecki Law Group, IL*

*Kleiman International Consultants, DC*

*Law Office of Ann Block, CA*

*Law Office of Margaret Boyce Furey, PA*

*Law Office of Patavee Vanadilok, PC, MO*

*Law Office of Spojmie Nasiri, PC, CA*

*Leaf Global Fintech Corporation, CO*

*Lithic Tech, OR*

*McEntee Law Group, IL*

*New Solutions Group LLC, MI*

*Nuventure CPA LLC, CO*

*Prime Counsel PLLC, VA*

*San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce, CA*

*Shore to Shore Advisory, FL*

*Siskind Susser PC, TN*

*Smith Immigration, CO*

*Talent Ready Now, LLC, MN*

*Urban Evolution, VA*

*Vedadi Wealth Management, MN*

**cc: Senate Appropriations Chair Patrick Leahy, Senate Appropriations Ranking Member Richard Shelby, House Appropriations Chair Rosa DeLauro, and House Appropriations Ranking Member Kay Granger**